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THE CHINESE COMMUNES

THE EDITORS

THE POLITICS OF THE LONG-HAUL

RALPH MILIBAND

New World or No World?

FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN

EDITORS . . . LEO HUBERMAN . . . PAUL M. SWEEZY

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

March 25th is P-Day for MR Press. On that date we will publish three books: (1) *Caste, Class, and Race* by Oliver C. Cox, Professor of Sociology at Lincoln University in Missouri; (2) *World Without War,* by J. D. Bernal, Professor of Physics at Birkbeck College of the University of London; and (3) *American Labor in Midpassage,* edited by Bert Cochran, co-editor of *The American Socialist.* Let us comment on them in turn.

(1) *Caste, Class, and Race* was first published by Doubleday in 1948 (see the ad on page 392 of this issue for what we thought of it at the time) and soon went out of print. It has been almost impossible to obtain a second-hand copy in recent years, as many MR readers doubtless know, a fact which we believe reflects a growing recognition of the book's intrinsic value as well as its unique place in the analytical literature of race relations in the United States. This is a big book, nearly 700 pages long, and expensive to reprint. Nevertheless, we have decided to reissue it at the original price of $7.50 and to make a specially attractive prepublication offer to MR readers many of whom, we know, find it almost impossible to buy the books they want to own at today's prices. If you order before March 25th, you can have this important work for half price plus 25 cents for handling and postage, that is for exactly four dollars. We think this is a good offer and hope that many of you will take advantage of it.

(2) *World Without War* has already become, like its author, a highly controversial subject in Britain. Some conservatives (though by no means all) don't seem to like it, while so far as we know the Left has been unanimously enthusiastic. Last month we quoted from the moving review by C. P. Snow which appeared in the *New Statesman.* To this we can now add the intelligence that *Tribune,* Aneurin Bevan's weekly, thought so well of

(*continued on inside back cover*)

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THE CHINESE COMMUNES

Nineteen fifty-eight was the year of China's "big leap forward." For a long time the American press, prevented by Mr. Dulles from sending its own reporters to China, seems to have been unaware that anything of special importance was happening in that part of the world. But more recently there has been a sharp awakening. It is now widely recognized that successes approaching the fantastic were achieved during 1958, and the pundits and editors have been rushing into print with explanations and interpretations.

A sampling of this literature reveals a high degree of uniformity in the reactions and views of American commentators. China's economic achievements are generally conceded—though occasionally one runs into a note of skepticism reminiscent of the way reports of early Soviet economic successes were received—and they are explained by one variant or another of what may be called the "slave labor" theory. The Chinese Communist Party, according to this theory, has herded the half-billion strong Chinese peasantry into great work camps called communes and there has dragooned them into an all-out effort involving what Joseph C. Harsch, the usually sober foreign correspondent of the *Christian Science Monitor,* calls "the greatest mass sacrifice of human heritage, human comfort, and human effort in all time." (*Christian Science Monitor,* December 24, 1958.)

How are the communes supposed to achieve their impressive results? The following would seem to be a fair summary of the answers which these American commentators give to this key question: By uprooting the traditional family pattern and instituting collective institutions for dining, housekeeping, care of young children and old people, and so on, an enormous womanpower force has been made available for agricultural and industrial labor. Stanley Rich, ABC correspondent in Hong Kong, estimates that 100 million women have thus been added to the labor force ("Mao's 'Big Family': The Communes in Communist China," *New Republic,* January 5, 1959). But this is not enough: both the men and the women must be made to work longer and harder. This is accomplished by various forms of pressure from the Party; by scaring the Chinese people with imaginary threats of United States aggression; but most of all by setting the norm for the work-month at 28 days and withholding wages from anyone

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who fails to meet it—in other words by a work-or-starve policy. In Mr. Harsch's vivid terminology, the destruction of the old pattern of family life involves the mass sacrifice of human heritage, the collective living arrangements the sacrifice of human comfort, and the lengthened work-month the sacrifice of human effort. By this reckoning, the cost of China's "leap forward" is already fearsome beyond calculation and may sooner or later be extended to include total disaster. "The men of Peking," writes Mr. Harsch, "must have been aware when they committed themselves to this program that they were gambling heavily, more heavily by far than Stalin ever did. The Chinese people are long-suffering, but there are limits to even their endurance."

How much truth is there in this grim picture? Some, of course. There is no doubt that the decisive factors in China's economic successes have been the mobilization and application of a much larger effective labor force than formerly. But beyond this the picture seems to be so distorted and fanciful as to be totally false in the impression it conveys. Let us try to see the matter in a somewhat more accurate and realistic focus.

In the first place, the evidence seems to us convincing that the commune movement, unlike the collectivization drive in the USSR in the late 1920s, did not originate in the Communist Party high command but rather among the peasants themselves. We did not accept this conclusion lightly or on the basis of official propaganda: the deceptions of the past, where the claims of Communist Parties have been involved, have been too numerous and disillusioning for that. But the cumulative testimony of competent eye-witnesses finally convinced us.

R. H. S. Crossman, one of Britain's leading Laborite journalists, was in China during September when the drive to form new communes was at its height. Writing at that time he reported:

> I was lucky enough to fly into China in the very week when the People's Commune movement . . . suddenly spread across the whole country. Later on, I visited three of these human beehives, which make the collectivism of the Israeli kibbutzim look very half-hearted. . . . All had been set up since my arrival in Peking and everything I saw suggested that this particular Leap Forward was spontaneous and unforeseen by the State Planning Commission. ("The Chinese Ironsides," *New Statesman,* Sept. 27, 1958.)

More recently, Crossman has elaborated on his report of what he saw in China in September ("The People's Communes," *New Statesman,* January 10, 1959). In the final paragraph of this second article, he states:

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> I am inclined to . . . conclude that the movement for the People's Communes did indeed come not from a remote official stratosphere but from that hard puritan elite of peasant Communists who have emerged in their tens of thousands through the countryside. If I am right, this episode confirms that Chinese Communism still remains a dynamic mass movement and that its leaders still respond to pressure from below.

A considerable body of evidence to the same effect has been supplied to us by our friend Professor D. D. Kosambi of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, in India. Professor Kosambi has himself been in China as an expert adviser on statistical techniques; he has talked privately and at length with many Indians (including the members of official delegations) who have been to China during recent months; and he remains in close touch with people inside China who are in no sense spokesmen for the regime. The following excerpt from a letter to Professor Kosambi by an Englishwoman resident in China is typical of the reports he has passed along to us. The communes were established, she writes, "because there were contradictions (as they say)"; and she continues:

> These were: (1) Water conservancy on the required scale was beyond the physical means of the cooperatives. . . . If a reservoir was built to serve two cooperatives there were disputes as to its use. In some cases, instead of combining to build a reservoir, each started to build its own—and often could not finish it. (2) Afforestation. There is a lot of mountainous land in this country as well as rich plainland. The cooperatives on the mountains had much land and few people, vice versa on the plains. If the mountain people planted trees they could not care for them and financially could not wait the required number of years for the fruit, timber, or what have you. (3) Pasturage. Same thing. Fewer cattle in the mountains, relatively more pasture; shortage of fodder on the plains, or scattered pasturage which wasted labor, etc. (4) Under the Forty Point Program for Agricultural Development (which has, I found, the most absolute support from everyone) everyone had to plant a certain variety of crops in each area. But there were differences in soils, terrain, and so on. One cooperative had land good for sesamum, another land good for cotton, but each had to grow both—with the result that the plans did not work out. In other words, irrational use of land. (5) The cooperatives had not enough funds to step up capital accumulation as wanted. I can best illustrate this by saying that they told me a medium-sized cooperative in that area would not be able to accumulate enough to buy a tractor for five years at the existing rate of development. Since the formation of the commune, what were formerly 27 cooperatives

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have already *put down the money* for 26 tractors—and only had not received them because they were, of course, on a waiting list. (6) There were wide discrepancies between "advanced" and "backward" cooperatives. The poorer ones would have liked help from the wealthier, but there was no provision for this.

Thus, they told me, the people started last winter talking about a *ta shê* or big cooperative. They had had some experience of what this would do because in the previous summer there had been a prolonged drought and the only way to solve it was "like a military operation"—i.e. by combining forces and making them very mobile. . . .

This all makes very good sense. It indicates that the force underlying the commune movement is what economists call the "economies of scale." And it is altogether plausible that the peasants themselves, having already escaped the confines of individual cultivation through the cooperatives, should be the first to see, in purely practical terms, the great advantages of even larger-scale organization. The generalization of the communes to the entire Chinese countryside was probably the work of the Party, but we see no reason to doubt either the spontaneous origins of the movement or its elemental force once under way.

The evidence of popular approval and participation is striking indeed. "The enthusiasm is indescribable," Professor Kosambi's English friend writes of the commune she visited. Members of a high-level official Indian delegation are quoted as reporting to incredulous Indian hearers that the morale of the communes is so high that no mechanism of surveillance or coercion is required to keep the members from cheating at the expense of the collectivity. And from the other side of the world comes evidence from an equally impressive source. Dr. Joseph Needham of Cambridge University, one of the world's leading Sinologists, spent three months and traveled 12,000 miles in China last summer gathering material for his monumental history of Chinese science and technology. Recently he recorded some of his impressions in a letter to *The New Statesman* of London, from which we quote the following:

My most outstanding impression of China this year was of the unreality of the idea so cherished in the West that the population is dragooned to perform its tasks. On the contrary everywhere one sees spontaneity (sometimes outrunning government planning), enthusiasm for increasing production and modernization, pride in an ancient culture equipping itself to take its rightful place in the modern world. What has been done in public health, social services, industrial development, and advancing amenities of all kinds, and what one sees going on under one's

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> eyes, would be absolutely impossible without the willing and convinced cooperation of all age groups and all types of workers, manual and intellectual. A new type of social engineering, the product of leadership from within, not from above, raises up movements as urgent popular demands and not as the mechanical result of drives from the central government. . . .
>
> [With regard to the communes,] this development was only just starting when I was in China, but I conceive it to be primarily an extension of the system of cooperative production which I have seen at work everywhere there. Deeply in accord with old Chinese social traditions, this principle is, I believe, welcomed and accepted by the overwhelming majority of Chinese working people.

This all fits together, and we find it as persuasive for its inner logic as for the eminence of its source. But in the final analysis, by far the most convincing evidence is the actual record of achievement during the year when the communes were formed. Collectivization of agriculture in the USSR was bitterly resisted by the peasants and could be put through only at the cost of a severe crisis of the whole agricultural economy from which the country was years in recovering.* Nothing of the sort has happened in China. Quite the contrary. According to official year-end figures, reported in the *New York Times* of January 1, total production of grains (including potatoes) *more than doubled* in 1958, rising to 375 million tons from 185 million in 1957. If this is the achievement of slave labor, then a lot of theories are in need of revision—and not only Marxist theories either.

As to the alleged mass sacrifice of human comfort involved in the new communal ways of living, the evidence is equally unconvincing. Professor Kosambi's English correspondent, who it will be remembered is a woman, writes as follows:

> The setting up of village restaurants, nurseries, and Old People's Homes seemed to me the real answer to women's emancipation. Said the women, dining rooms save them at least four hours work a day (they used to walk about three miles a day around the stone quern grinding the flour). In one area of 9,000 families, they have now set up 295 dining rooms with

* This does not mean that collectivization in the USSR was a failure or should never have been undertaken. Its immediate aim was to enable the state to secure control of the agricultural surplus as an absolutely indispensable preliminary to rapid industrialization, and this it accomplished. The alternative would have been a much slower rate of industrialization and quite possibly total defeat in World War II. History sometimes presents nations and people with cruel choices, a fact which Americans would do well to remember in the years ahead.

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five cooks each—saving 7,515 times four hours every day! Secondly the nurseries and Old People's Homes free them from further household cares. Thirdly, they now get wages, and what is more important, the wages are paid to them, not to the head of the family as under the old "work-point" system. A woman told me that under the old co-op she had to cook, mind the kids, etc., and managed to earn about six yuan twice a year which was paid to her husband as head of the family who passed it to his mother to lay out. So if she wanted a reel of thread she had to ask her mother-in-law. Now she gets five or six yuan a month, paid into her own hands. . . . And since grain and most vegetables in this crop are "on supply" in addition to the monthly wage, they can eat as much as they like three times a day. So can everyone in the family—kids at the nursery, old people at the OPH. The effect on big families with small labor power is of course tremendous. The general thing is to have what they call "improved living" every five or six days—i.e. to eat *meat*, which they pay for. Twice a year was about the record for eating meat in the past.

And Dr. Needham, with the point of view of many Westerners in mind, contributes this commentary on the new communal living:

> Current criticism of the "communes" seems to rest, often enough, on limitations of outlook characteristic of highly industrialized Western societies. People here who dislike the idea of families eating in restaurants and canteens know only Western homes provided with gas stoves, electric washing machines, etc.—if they had had any experience of the slavery of the Chinese woman throughout the ages to the charcoal or brushwood stove and the primitive water supply, they would understand that the cooperative farm or works restaurant and the public baths today seem more like a heaven on earth to millions. . . . Emancipation of women to follow careers, whether on the farm, railway or factory, or in intellectual work, is one of the most remarkable features of present-day China, as I know from personal contact with innumerable friends all over the country. Nor am I particularly shocked by the idea of restaurants where one does not have to pay, having enjoyed many a meal under such conditions in the kibbutzim of Israel as well as in the educational institutions of my own country. This is a matter of pride in China today, not of compulsion or regimentation; the direct reward of the successes of agricultural production.

All of this makes excellent sense, too. Why shouldn't the great majority of Chinese approve of the commune system, and work harder under it, if it enables them to produce a great deal more and live better?

This, however, is certainly not the end of the matter. The com-

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mune system also has very far-reaching non-economic implications, and it is undoubtedly these that raise up furies in the breasts of American journalists. Surely, very few will be found to say that the communes are bad because they allow a backward country to double its agricultural output in a single year! But there can hardly be many in the United States today who will feel sympathy, let alone speak kind words in public, for a system which is the avowed enemy of individualism; seeks the end of the small family as the basic unit of society; wants to wipe out the key distinctions of society as we know it in the West (between workers and peasants, between town and country, between mental work and manual work, between peasants and intellectuals, between collective ownership and ownership by the people); and aims at the eventual disappearance of wages and even of money itself.*

A system which looks beyond immediate economic objectives to such profound structural changes as these arouses our journalistic (and academic) commentators to a real frenzy of emotional antipathy. "Communal uniformity and drabness," "a faceless army denuded of identity," "anthill society," "Orwell's 1984"—these are typical of the charged epithets which stud the descriptions of the goals the Chinese are pursuing. Every right-thinking person will be duly impressed, horrified, and repelled.

But what about left-thinking people? Some of them seem to share the same sentiments, and others may be carried away by the torrent of denunciation and abuse to which they are daily subjected. To all of them we say: don't be taken in by your ideological and political enemies! The goals enumerated above are the historic goals of the socialist movement, espoused not only by Marx and Engels but by the great utopians before them and by such non-Marxists as Kropotkin and William Morris after them. *The Chinese are being passionately denounced precisely because they have committed themselves to by far the greatest attempt yet made to put these socialist ideals into practice.*

That this is indeed what is at issue will be seen from a careful reading of the more thoughtful denunciations, such as Stanley Rich's in the *New Republic*. He quotes with horror from *Red Flag*, the Communist Party's theoretical journal, a statement setting forth the aim to "undermine the family built on the basis of the class exploita-

* This enumeration of goals is compiled—verbatim in the case of the distinctions to be wiped out—from Mr. Rich's article in the *New Republic* cited above. We see no reason to question its authenticity.

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tion system. That kind of family which carried out individual production with the family or the household as the unit . . . was nothing but a poor cage for the working people. . . . Individual domestic labor . . . is also a remnant of the family under the conditions of individual production. . . . In the socialist society [individuals] will no longer have to worry over their inability to establish or to maintain a most simple family. . . . In the socialist and communist collective body, everybody takes up labor with joy, and all jointly and reasonably share the fruits of their labor." A bourgeois individualist may properly be horrified, of course. But how can a socialist fail to agree with every word of this statement? And how could he possibly see in it evidence of a sinister design to destroy the family as such or rob the working people of their freedom and individuality?

Another count in Mr. Rich's indictment is "the fact that the new manpower is both mobile and interchangeable. 'When the farming season is brisk,' boasts a Honan report, commune members 'will be busy in the field; and when the slack season in agriculture arrives, they can work in the factories.' " From this Mr. Rich draws the conclusion that "the worker . . . is stripped of his technical identity. He may be a teacher one day, a farmer the next, a steel-smelter the next, depending on . . . the varying industrialization demands of the commune involved." And what, may we ask, is this "technical identity" but that crippling and mind-destroying enslavement to more and more narrowly defined specializations which socialists and humanists alike have repeatedly denounced for at least the last hundred and fifty years as one of the worst features of capitalist society? If the Chinese communes will do away with it, how can socialists withhold an accolade of praise?

Or take still another count in Mr. Rich's indictment:

> . . . even the wage system will disappear if the communes work out as Peking both plans and expects. For it has been made explicitly clear that in the "Grandfather Society" [Rich's translation of the Chinese term *kung shê* which is more commonly rendered as "commune"] even money will eventually become meaningless. Within 6 to 10 years every one of China's by then near-billion population will be totally and solely dependent on the commune.

Compare this with Marx's famous advice to the working class (as stated, for example, in *Value, Price and Profit*): "Instead of the *conservative* motto: *'A fair day's wages for a fair day's work!'* they ought to inscribe on their banner the *revolutionary* watchword:

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'Abolition of the wages system!' " If the Chinese communes have now accepted this advice in earnest, can socialists chide them for it?

"At the moment," Mr. Rich finds, "the communes are eliminating all 'bourgeois' differences." We listed these differences above, but they are worth repeating: "between workers and peasants, between town and country, between mental work and manual work, between peasants and intellectuals, between collective ownership and ownership by the people." And he adds that "tomorrow . . . the communes will have completely eradicated the concept of 'unequal bourgeois rights' and will have ushered China into the final utopia of true communism where 'the state will be limited to protecting the country from external aggression but will play no role at home.' " This last remark is presumably a reference to one of the most striking and revolutionary characteristics of the communes, that they manage *all* economic and governmental affairs within their respective areas. Already the lowest ranks of state officialdom have been abolished: the commune as a body is responsible to the state, but there are no state officials over the commune. It is still much too early to say how this scheme is going to work out, but it seems clear that at the least it has very exciting possibilities. Let those who profit from bourgeois differences and enjoy unequal bourgeois rights scream bloody murder—they have every reason to, because if this Chinese experiment succeeds their kind of society is as surely done for as ever an *ancien regime* was. But let us who have faith in the potentialities of cooperation and planning, and look to a better future for the human race honor the Chinese people for what they are trying to do and hope with all our hearts for their speedy and full success.

Not, of course, that everything is roses in China today. The people do have to work hard for what they get, and it still isn't much. Equipment and technique are for the most part scarce and primitive. The road to modernization is long and doubtless uphill most of the way. Moreover, even those features of the present situation which give the most ground for hope have their negative side. To quote from R. H. S. Crossman's September article in the *New Statesman* (he is speaking of the peasant leaders whom he met in various parts of the country):

> Only one of them . . . was a party functionary. All the rest ten years before had been illiterate, helpless victims of landlordism. Today . . . the main impression they make is one of self-reliance and self-possession.
>
> Once again, I thought, the common man has proved himself capable of wielding authority, and I was reminded irresistibly

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> of Cromwell's soldiers as they revealed themselves in the Putney debates of 1647. Here, I thought, is another Puritan revolution. Here are Iconoclasts and Ironsides, like our own, who combine a cool power of practical decision with an arrogant certainty of predestined victory; a devotion to the liberation of the people with a sectarian persecution of minority opinion. . . .
>
> The Communists are obviously determined to prevent the mandarins taking over their revolution and re-creating a China ruled by the intellectual elite. But, in rectifying the intelligentsia, they are scaring it out of its skin and inducing a terrifying degree of intellectual conformism. . . .

Up to a point, at any rate, the accuracy of this description is confirmed by Joseph Needham. "I agree with R. H. S. Crossman," he wrote in the letter to the *New Statesman* quoted above, "that much in China today reminds one of Cromwell's Ironsides, with all their conceptions of social morality."

Puritanism, fanaticism, arrogance, enforced intellectual conformity—these are qualities which recur in periods of revolutionary advance. Perhaps they are the necessary levers by which peoples and nations are pried out of old ruts and habits and set on the road to new and higher achievements. But they are very far from being amiable qualities, and—at least in our judgment—no society of which they are a prominent feature can by any stretch of the imagination be called a good society. How long they will persist in China or to what lengths they will be pushed we do not pretend to know. But we do know that we, and we are sure many other socialists all over the world, will be anxiously watching China's further development for signs of relaxation and liberalization.

In the meantime, perhaps the best commentary on China in the late 1950s was made many years ago by one of our own most creative thinkers. Writing his great essay on "The Moral Equivalent of War" in 1910, William James made the following statement, as profoundly true as it was prophetic:

> What the whole community comes to believe in grasps the individual as in a vise. The war-function has graspt us so far; but constructive interests may some day seem no less imperative, and impose on the individual a hardly lighter burden.

We in this country are still in the grip of the war-function. China has made a "great leap forward" to a new era of constructive interests. As William James foresaw, they "seem no less imperative, and impose on the individual a hardly lighter burden."

(January 14, 1959)

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THE POLITICS OF THE LONG HAUL

BY RALPH MILIBAND

> *Men make their own history, but not just as they please. They do not choose circumstances for themselves, but have to work upon circumstances as they find them, have to fashion the material handed down by the past.*
> —Karl Marx

This was originally intended to be an essay on the problems of the transition to socialism in Britain. On reflection, the conviction has grown upon me that such an essay, in our present circumstances, must consist of speculations unanchored to present-day reality and involve a great deal too much crystal-gazing. Questions such as that of "capitalist resistance" to socialist change, and what to do about it, are interesting and important; but they are not more urgently relevant than the question of the Labor Party's resistance to it. The problem is not the transition to socialism in Britain; it is, in any realistic and unrhetorical perspective, the transition to the transition, or the prospects and tasks for socialists in Britain in the short and middle range future.

The Labor Party and Capitalist Change

Everybody knows there is going to be another Labor government sooner or later, possibly sooner. But no one gets very worked up about it. No one in the Labor movement seriously believes that it is going to mean really important changes in Britain's social and economic structure or a fundamental reappraisal of Britain's posture in the world. And there cannot be many Tories who really fear that it will threaten civilization as we know it.

This cool anticipation of another Labor government on the part of Tories is not new: they have always been much less worried about such episodes than they have allowed to appear in public. Apocalyptic warnings of the somber fate which must befall this country in the event of a Labor government's accession to office have been issued at every general election since Labor became a major political con-

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Like the author's article, "The Politics of Contemporary Capitalism" in the December issue of MR, the present article is an abridgment from The New Reasoner. *Mr. Miliband teaches political science at the London School of Economics.*

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tender. This forms part of the expected ritual of politics. It is hardly taken seriously nowadays even by timorous old ladies with modest post office savings.

On the other hand, the marked degree of soberness with which most people in the Labor movement contemplate an eventual Labor victory is more striking, and contrasts dramatically with the expectations which preceded the victory of 1945. Party activists will, quite likely, work hard for Labor's return. But they will not expect great things from its achievement of office.

Such skepticism is hardly surprising when one looks at Labor's present leaders or at its announced program. Even mescalin wouldn't make those leaders look or sound like the apostles of a new dispensation, or like eager travelers straining to set out on an adventurous journey. They seem more like men oppressed by the steepness of the road, the obstacles on the way, the difficulties ahead, the need for extreme caution. They appear short of breath in anticipation. It is difficult to believe that they have very good lungs.

As to the studies in evasion which the Labor Party has been issuing from time to time under the name of policy pamphlets, they fully illustrate how far the Party has now moved from the aim it first proclaimed in 1918, and which it has never officially repudiated, of establishing a socialist society "upon the basis of the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange, and the best obtainable system of popular administration and control of each industry or service."

Nor do the pronouncements of the parliamentary leaders suggest an unambiguous will to contribute *in practice* to the termination of the international civil war which defines such a large part of the reality of our times.

This is a somber though not, I think, an overdrawn picture; so somber that many people in the Labor movement who think it true are tempted into a search for scapegoats. The Left is often prone to a demonological interpretation of history and it is now fashionable among frustrated socialists to attribute Labor's condition to the poverty of its leadership. The leadership *is* deplorable. But this is not the whole story. Leaders tend to reflect tendencies, even though they often distort them. If they did not reflect tendencies, they would cease to be leaders.

Nor is it sufficient to deplore the renunciation of socialism implicit in Labor's announced program; or even to present—though this is certainly necessary—detailed alternatives to that program. For the really important point about an abortion like *Industry and Society*

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is not that it should be seriously advanced as a contribution to a *socialist* program, but that it should have been endorsed by a large majority of delegates at the 1957 Labor Party Conference.

Leaders and programs are the symptoms of the disease, not the disease itself. That is why we shall not begin to understand what we are up against, and what can be done about it, unless we first try to relate Labor's attitude to wider socio-economic forces which have had a determinant influence in shaping the reality, as distinct from the image, of its role, not only at the present time, but throughout its history. This should not be too difficult to do. After all, the next Labor government will be the fifth in the series. There is plenty of concrete experience to go on.

The third Labor government (1945-1950) was an amalgam of all kinds of impulses and aspirations that had been bottled up since 1931. Of these, I think it is true to say that the socialist ones were the least powerfully expressed in practice, though they were the most constantly stressed in words. The stress is, of course, not surprising. It was the first time that a majority Labor government, formally pledged to socialism, had come to power, and it was entirely to be expected that its accession to office should have been viewed as the opening of an era of socialist construction, as marking the beginning of a fundamental process of economic and social transformation. And the fact that the Attlee government took office at the end of the war immeasurably strengthened the hope that, with the military victory over fascism abroad and the electoral defeat of the Tories at home, a new chapter of British history was about to be written, in red ink.

And indeed, there were changes, in many important directions. The mistake was to see them as part of a general attack on capitalism, as socialist innovations. In fact, Labor's program and its practice in the postwar years really represented the *continuation,* even though in a much more deliberate and accentuated form (and the qualification is important) of social, economic, and administrative changes and tendencies which did not originate with the Labor Party and which are not designed to further the achievement of a socialist society.

In many ways, British politics in this century have been dominated by the inescapable need to regulate capitalism by means of marginal collectivism. This is not to say that parties have been agreed either on the required extent or on the desirable bias of marginal collectivism. Anchored as they are to different and divergent class needs, the Labor and Conservative Parties have differed significantly on both counts. But the difference has not been that between the maintenance of

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"free enterprise" and the transcendence of capitalism. That has been the image which both parties have sought to give of themselves and of each other for purposes of political warfare. In practice, both have pursued policies primarily designed to *adjust* capitalist enterprise to the logic of its own development.

Marginal collectivism is not a purely British phenomenon. It has been characteristic of all advanced industrial societies, certainly not excluding the most advanced of them all. That is why the argument as to whether enterprise should be "free" or not becomes increasingly futile with every year that goes by. There will never again be a period of history when that issue will have serious meaning. Marginal collectivism, state intervention, help, and control, is now the price which capitalism has learned it must pay as a condition of its survival as a more or less going economic concern. No advanced industrial system is now capable of operating at even the bare minimum of efficiency without it.

Forces as profound as those which have been at work within capitalist economies throughout this century were bound to find explicit political recognition, and the agents of marginal collectivism have in fact been varied in the extreme. They have included the Nazis in Germany and the New Deal Democrats in the United States. This in itself is a sure sign of the inevitability and the universality of the trend, irrespective of specific ideological bias. There is no important political grouping anywhere in the capitalist world which has not been compelled to accept it as one of the basic facts of organized life. And the irreversibility of the trend is well exhibited by the fact that the alternance of parties in power has only involved changes of emphasis in the degree, manner, and bias of state intervention, not changes in basic policy.

There is a view, deeply embedded in Labor thinking and which largely stems from the experience of capitalism in the 19th century, that *any* kind of state intervention, *any* degree of collectivism, represents an erosion of capitalism and must therefore be treated as an advance to socialism. This is a profoundly mistaken view.

The Impact of Marginal Collectivism

There are many people in the Labor movement who believe that collectivism in Britain has gone far enough to render obsolete the notion of capitalism itself and who see the "mixed economy" in which we are supposedly living as constituting a system which, while not yet quite socialist in character, is already partly so,

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with relatively little of the fuss and bother which always seems to attend experiments in social change among less reasonable peoples.

At the other extreme, there are those who cling to the notion that capitalism is precisely what it was, only more so, and that whatever changes have occurred in its structure and motivations have not affected its fundamental character. I think the second view is a closer approximation to reality than the first, but that both, in differing degrees, are inadequate in their evaluation of what is an extremely complex total situation, with implications that can only be properly discerned by refusing to abstract from this or that particular feature of it. Many of our present difficulties and confusions stem precisely from our inability to disentangle the diverse and contradictory strands which make up that total situation.

Marginal collectivism in advanced capitalist societies has been a response to three overriding and related needs: the economic need, the welfare need, and the military need. Of the three, it is usually the second which is most often stressed because it is the one which is the most obvious and striking and also because the notion of the "Welfare State" greatly enhances the view of the state as neutrally responding with indiscriminate impartiality to all pressures, from whatever quarter. The Welfare State is implicitly, and often explicitly, set in opposition to the "capitalist state" and is deemed to have superseded it, together with the capitalist society it upheld.

In actual fact, the state has responded to the pressure for welfare precisely because that response is economically, socially, and politically possible within the framework of capitalism and is indeed desirable for the *maintenance* of that system. One of the facts of our epoch, crucial in its ramified implications, is that acute physical illfare is not capitalism's Siamese twin: it is merely a feature of it in one of its phases of development.

On the other hand, it is important to recognize that welfare collectivism, while it does not destroy the basis of capitalism, i.e., the retention in private ownership of the predominant part of society's means to life, nevertheless does introduce complicating factors in its operation. Over the years, welfare collectivism has dealt a crippling blow to that narrow individualist ethos which was both produced by and which so greatly helped the development of capitalism. It has established minimal criteria of well-being whose achievement has been accepted as depending on considerations other than ability to pay. And there is a dynamic about welfare collectivism which makes us all echo Oliver Twist's demand for more: it creates

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expectations which cannot be denied for long without serious risk.

It may well be said that welfare collectivism has not eliminated poverty, in itself a shifting concept; it may equally be said that the working classes mostly finance the welfare benefits they enjoy. But these benefits are not diminished simply by setting them in an actuarial perspective. Nor can it be doubted that, even within its limitations, welfare collectivism has had immense importance in the degree to which it has helped reduce working class alienation from capitalism and its institutions.

But its effects have also been considerable on that segment of the middle classes which has traditionally "sided with the workers." For one thing, it has helped to diminish the feeling of guilt which has always been a component part of the espousal by middle-class radicalism of working-class claims. In this sense, it has reduced the impulse to alliance. But it has also produced among a good many socialists a feeling of resentment against the working classes for their acceptance of the benefits of welfare collectivism and their reluctance, not least because of that acceptance, to play the historical role of gravedigger of the old order which they alone can play. I don't know how many socialists have been alienated from the Labor movement because the working classes refuse to dig. I should guess a good many.

The Role of Trade Unions

The contemporary pattern of "industrial relations" illustrates similarly varied and divergent tendencies. Trade unionism itself has long lost the terrors it held for employers and the owning classes generally. So long as it remains mainly confined to the collective sale of labor on reasonable terms (and it mostly does), employers find it a more or less acceptable element in the process of economic activity. Of course, it is often disagreeable to employers in that it interposes between them and those who depend on wages for their livelihood a degree of protection which makes the daily confrontation between the "two sides of industry" a less one-sided affair. Still, trade unionism, while pressing for and often obtaining a "larger share of the cake" (in itself a revealingly limiting formula), also tends to discipline labor and moderate its claims within bounds that admit of bargaining.

As heads of large enterprises which they do not wish to see jeopardized, trade union leaders, bent on "reasonable" settlements, are bound to find the animation of the commodity they sell a

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matter for regret, unless that animation can be strictly regulated. This is obviously not the only factor making for the progressive bureaucratization of modern trade unionism, but it is certainly an important one, and the one most obviously responsible for the alienation of those who bargain from those who are being bargained for. Nor is the impact of trade union bureaucratization confined to trade union members. Here too, there has come into being among many socialists a profoundly ambivalent feeling in regard to trade unions. Their every instinct tells them that trade unions must be strong and highly organized; but they also fear the bureaucracy and dislike the bias towards orthodoxy and caution on the part of trade union leaders which seem to follow strength and organization like faithful shadows. More and more, they see trade unions as constituting new quasi-irresponsible power domains in a society increasingly riddled with them.

Marginal collectivism, however, has added another facet to trade union life which is an important part of the more general trend towards the organization and regulation of economic life. Employers and wage-earners, both highly organized, are engaged less and less in a face to face dialogue. The state is now a regular and actively involved third party in the conversation. And state intervention, regulation, and arbitration also powerfully help to foster the notion of the state's neutrality. However much it may be argued that state intervention has a positive bias against labor's claims in the long run, and often in the short run, it still remains true that the state is often compelled to see industrial strife from a point of view a good deal broader than the point of view of the individual employer and may press for solutions to any given industrial dispute which, while not wholly meeting the claims of labor, yet do not give a total victory to employers either. That trade union leaders now regularly clamor for state protection against employers suggests that they expect *some* protection from it; and often get it.

What we are in fact witnessing is a steadily growing integration of trade union activity into a controlled system of economic organization. Private, autonomous, self-regulated trade unionism is becoming as obsolete as private capitalism itself. Contemporary capitalism cannot afford private trade unionism; but neither can it afford to give to trade unions more than a marginal share in the making of economic decisions. What this means is the institutionalization of the trade union movement as a permanently subsidiary component of a capitalist economy, unable to affect its opera-

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tion save within some quite narrow limits. This is a position which many trade union leaders find quite acceptable, provided they are allowed to make just a bit of a splash. To expect unions in this kind of economic system *not* to be bureaucratic is naïve.

State Regulation and Control

If labor cannot remain private in our present system, neither can industry. By sheer necessity, the state and industry are now close allies and the partnership, though irksome to industry in some of its aspects, is generally recognized as inevitable and ultimately beneficial—not least to industry itself. Oddly, however, it is the irksome aspects of the alliance which have always impressed the Labor Party most, so that the control and regulation of industry have always figured in Labor programs as daring incursions on capitalist territory, and as in some ways designed to undermine capitalism. This illusion, for it is an illusion, is of course encouraged by capitalist hostility to many forms of state intervention. "So long as they squeal, we must be hurting them" is Labor's profound conviction. But people often squeal when receiving an injection, even though the injection improves their health. In sober truth, state control and regulation is no more the enemy of capitalist enterprise than is welfare collectivism. Of course, the "national interest," as interpreted by the government of the day, may conflict with the immediate interest of this or that sector of the economy, and some forms of control may be resented by all of private enterprise. But what matters here is the overall impact; and it seems clear that state control and regulation, in its overall impact, does not undermine capitalist power or for that matter capitalist profitability. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that, in a predominantly capitalist economy, state intervention must by necessity be designed to strengthen capitalist viability. It must inevitably, as the Labor Party has now explicitly admitted, aim at the *improvement* of the system's operation.

There is a lesson to be learnt here from the experience of Nazi Germany. No capitalist economy has ever been more tightly regulated than the German economy under Hitler. Yet, though the Nazis imposed their will and purposes on every facet of German economic life, and had, for obvious reasons, no difficulty in eliciting obedience, they did not destroy German capitalism nor even substantially transform it. And if Nazi experience seems too alien to be relevant, there is British wartime experience to draw upon. The British economy was thoroughly regulated and controlled during the war years, but British

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capitalism did not emerge from that ordeal notably weakened.

State intervention and capitalist power are not antithetical. The decisions of the state in regard to economic affairs are not even taken independently of business. Nor could they be, since the execution of these decisions must largely depend on the cooperation of business. In fact, it is less and less realistic to speak of state power and business power as distinct, let alone antagonistic entities; the two are ever more closely intertwined and the "leaders of industry" (significantly, this never refers to trade union officials) are well entrenched in the vast apparatus of control through which the state seeks to ensure essential minima of coordination and cohesion. The controllers control themselves. And the appearance of trade unionists on the boards of regulatory agencies hardly invalidates the pattern of capitalist control.

This is not the result of some vast conspiracy. An economic system predominantly based on the private ownership and control of the means to life cannot be administered and regulated save with the participation of the representatives of business. To believe otherwise is to miss the heartbeat of the system. State intervention can superimpose a bureaucratic apparatus upon the operation of business enterprise. It cannot supersede it.

The point may be illustrated differently by reference to the nationalized industries and services. In theory, nothing could be more socialistic than the public ownership of basic utilities. But nationalization, *so long as it remains confined to a marginal part of the economy,* does not involve much more than the extension of the principle of control. This is why the Tories, though they continue to dislike the nationalization of basic utilities on principle, have learned to accept it in practice; they have found that it need not seriously weaken the operation of capitalist enterprise and might even be made to strengthen it.

Capitalism and Nationalization

This too is something which Labor finds it difficult to believe. Like Owen who saw his cooperative communities as islands of virtue in a sea of competitive greed, so has Labor nursed the fond illusion that the nationalized industries could be bastions of socialism in capitalist territory, with an internal life radically different from life outside, and moved by a dynamic altogether different from the dynamic of capitalist enterprise. But the "public sector," so long as it remains a marginal part of the economy, cannot be made to obey criteria of

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behavior fundamentally different from those which prevail in the "private sector," and its management must remain geared to considerations and habits similar to those that govern comparable giants in the "private sector." Hence the complaints now so often heard that there is little to distinguish the life of the nationalized industries from that of large-scale private enterprise. But those who complain are mistaken when they suggest that nationalization has "failed." On the contrary, it has succeeded very well in the limited objective of improving the efficiency of a part of the economy which capitalist enterprise had found it increasingly difficult to handle properly. It was always short-sighted to believe that marginal public ownership could do more and constitute a socialist, as well as a nationalized, part of a capitalist economy.

The last point I wish to note in this context is how greatly the militarization of the economy since 1939 (and the process was only temporarily checked in the immediate postwar years,) has enhanced the drive towards state intervention in and control of economic affairs. Modern military strategy is largely a function of civilian production geared to the requirements of the military. The state, the army, and business now form an interlocking directorate, whose close integration is essential to "defense." Business is not involved in the running of armies; but the military now greatly impinges on the running of business. That is perhaps why retired army men so often find a seat on the boards of industry. In one capacity or another, they have been there before.

I have been arguing so far that the logic of capitalist development is driving us with irresistible force towards forms of economic organization which bear no resemblance to the image of capitalism contained in the formula "free enterprise." All that we know of the Labor Party's past practice and present program suggests that it is eager to give expression, to be the agent of these forces and to facilitate the adaptation of capitalism to its inherent needs. In this sense, it is now tending to be the neo-capitalist party *par excellence*.

For it to be otherwise, it would have to seek the transcendence of the categories of capitalism in the only way in which these categories can be transcended, that is, by extending public ownership to the point where it encompasses the predominant part of the economy. This its leadership does not at present intend to do. It will, no doubt, re-nationalize road haulage when it is returned to office; it may restore public ownership of the steel industry, and this would certainly be a step forward, which is why there may well

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be a determined attempt to evade the promises made in regard to steel; the next Labor government may also take under public ownership some unfortunate firm or other which is not "serving the nation well," whatever that may mean. But everyone remotely interested in politics knows that the present leadership of the Labor Party does not see these measures as forming part of a continuing program of public ownership and that it does not believe in its radical extension.

But this hostility to public ownership, I would repeat, is less important than the present willingness of the larger part of the Labor movement to tolerate it, and indeed to endorse it. Labor leaders are short of breath in anticipation; but it does not look as if a majority of their followers are themselves all that eager to supply them with oxygen. The Labor movement may not have lost the dynamic which wins elections; but it does not at present possess the dynamic which turns electoral victories into important milestones on the road to a socialist society.

There is a majority of the Labor movement for whom common ownership has now little appeal, and it is therefore content to follow orthodox Labor leaders and rethinking unsocialists in the exploration of the bypaths of social reform.

There is no point in socialists thinking that the present boredom with and indifference to our society's economic base is going to change miraculously and overnight into a mass enthusiasm for its transformation, or that an undefined set of favorable circumstances will suddenly make common ownership the policy of the Labor Party without continuous mass pressure. This it *not* to say that more favorable circumstances for the propagation of the socialist case will never occur and that the mass pressure will never be generated. What it does mean is that it will take time.

If this be true, socialists must attune themselves to the realization that they are in for the politics of the long haul.

The Politics of the Long Haul

The realization that the question of the transition to socialism is not at this stage part of the agenda of politics in Britain may be frustrating to many socialists, but it need not be paralyzing, nor need it send one rushing to the cultivation of one's garden. On the contrary, it seems to me to provide a much needed sense of perspective, and it helps to avoid an exaggerated gloom at this or that failure, disappointment, or defeat.

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But that sense of perspective must, of course, do more than provide one with a quasi-mystical belief that all will be well in the end. It must provide an agenda of theoretical and practical priorities.

Very high on that agenda, there is the need for socialists to make clear once again, but in the vocabulary of the 1960s, *why* common ownership of the means to life is the key to socialist change.

This demands more than a devoted application to the preparation of a "shopping list" of industries to be taken over at some unspecified future date; more also than a search for new techniques and forms of common ownership. All this is undoubtedly necessary. But it is a typical Fabian illusion to think that the high road to socialism is paved with the mastery of administrative techniques. What we need first of all is an adequate grasp of the live forces at work in our society and, to use jargon, of the close interconnections between society's economic base and such superstructural manifestations of it that it is possible to trace. What we need, in other words, is to relate so much that makes up the total culture of this society to the economic system which underpins that culture. Socialists must at least seek to relate phenomena like the erosion of political democracy, the debasement of cultural values, the brutalization and trivialization of life, the international dangers we face, to the fundamental unhingment that now exists between existing economic forces and the obsolescent social forces which feed upon them.

I should deny that this a mere academic exercise, nor do I in any case think there is anything "mere" about intelligent academic exercises. There is a good deal to be said for clarification at any time, and not less at this time than at any other: perhaps more.

The next job, however, is to carry this clarification to the Labor movement, in other words, to make socialists. There *is* an audience, even if it is now a bored audience, in all that multitude of institutions which go to make the Labor movement. Nor is the boredom of the audience a fixed factor. Our situation is not static; neo-capitalism is hardly at peace with itself; the growingly corporate economy is not a smooth alternative to an altogether differently based order of society. On the contrary, the tensions it harbors, far from diminishing, are likely to increase. If this be true, there is no reason to think that the boredom of the audience cannot be turned into a receptive interest.

But making an effective case for socialism now also requires more than an elucidation of the connection between so many of our ills and dangers and our economic and social system; more, too, than an

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alluring presentation of the benefits to be derived from their transformation. It also requires a really serious attempt to meet the genuine fears which are in so many people's minds as to the nature of a society with a socialized base. To dismiss these fears as stupid is itself stupid; to ignore their plausibility is to confuse wholesale collectivism with socialism. There is no excuse at this stage of history for refusing to see that the achievement of a socialized economic base does not automatically and overnight resolve a multitude of problems whose solution is, in fact, what distinguishes a socialist society from a society with a socialized base. Of these problems, the problem of democratic control and participation in decision-making is obviously paramount. It, and others, cannot, it is quite certain, be solved in theory. But awareness of their existence and a clear willingness not to talk them out of existence with rhetorical incantations is a precondition to the presentation of an effective socialist case. Socialists will not carry conviction if they give the impression that they are only shuffling clichés for want of a chance to shuffle people. To put it somewhat grandly, they must persuade their audience in the labor movement that common ownership is not intended as a means to the establishment of a technocrats' paradise, but as the material foundation of a socialist humanism; that it is not only a means to the liberation of production but, and at the same time, to the liberation of people; not only a means for the more efficient use of techniques, but a means for the reconciliation of techniques to life.

There is so much which is wrong with the organized labor movement, and with its only serious political expression, that socialists often tend to forget all that is right with it. At the present time, what is mostly wrong with it is that it contains only a minority of socialists. Above all else, and beyond all other political commitments, this, it seems to me, is the first problem to which socialists must address themselves in the period of the transition to the transition. There are some who yearningly look for a short cut. There isn't one. Now is the time to get *in* and push.

It is fundamentally false and completely unhistorical to regard the work for legal reform as nothing but the revolution spread out over a longer period of time, or to regard the revolution as reform concentrated into a shorter period of time. Social revolution and legal reform are different not only in point of time; they are fundamentally different factors.

—Rosa Luxemburg

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NEAR EAST OIL

BY HARVEY O'CONNOR

Part 2

The excess funds of the Sheik of Kuwait haunt the Arab world. The $325 million or so a year is all his to enjoy. Munificently, as befits a Moslem prince, he allots a third to his prolific family and another third to his realm, with bizarre results. Cadillacs among the mud huts, air-conditioned palaces amid heaps of rubbish, the most extravagant Western luxuries cheek-by-jowl with Bedouin hunger, do not escape the questioning gaze of a growing minority of Kuwaitis, or the reproachful attention of Cairo commentators.

The third of the Sheik's income that goes to London for investment at 2½ percent or so for his private account, is the single biggest fortune in Britain, amounting now to some $750 million. As such, it is the anchor of British finance, leading some to say that the Empire's solvency depends on the remittance from a tiny piece of desert real estate. The *New York Times'* roving editor, C. L. Sulzberger, observes that "it is a paradox of this anti-colonial era that if Britain's empire were suddenly to relinquish its appanages in the Persian Gulf, NATO and the free world might collapse."

That the Sheik enjoys the protection of the British, who control his foreign affairs and "advise" him on his finances, has led Paul Johnson of the London *New Statesman* to conclude that "we are thus economically as well as politically tied to the rotting corpse of the ruling family." Johnson estimates that Britain benefits to the tune of some $600 million a year from Kuwait, including the profits of British Petroleum, the sterling income from the sale of oil, and the Sheik's investments. Loss of Kuwait "could inflict a mortal blow at our world trading position."

The great wealth that has descended upon the al-Subah family in Kuwait and on the royal family of Saudi Arabia—altogether some $625 million a year to their private purses—contrasts so starkly with the abominable poverty of the Arab lands and their great need for investment capital that it has become a scandal throughout the Near

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This is the concluding section of a two-part article which began in the January issue. Harvey O'Connor, author of The Empire of Oil, *spent five months in the Near and Middle East in the winter and spring of* 1958. *A table summarizing important statistical data will be found at the end of the article.*

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East. The Cairo daily *al-Ahram* comments that of the $4 billion the Arab nations have received from oil in the past ten years, not more than $300 million has been spent on social services. The rest has been spent for raising armies, industries, and standards of living. But whose? "Armies of belles in Beirut, Cairo, Paris, and New York for the Arab princes; industries concerned only with arousing desires; living standards confined to palaces, elegant apartments, and limousines."

Kuwait's financial situation has so many fascinating angles that only a few can be singled out. For example, the sum the Sheik invests in London each year equals almost exactly the loan which Egypt has obtained from the Soviet Union to continue work on the high dam at Aswan. This is the dam which will keep half the Nile's waters from emptying uselessly into the sea, and assure Egypt's future generations of nourishment. The alarmists have said that this loan ties Egypt to the Soviet world, but the Sheik, whose name is adorned by such titles as Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (the leading British colonial order) and Companion of the Order of the Indian Empire, could have avoided this Communist coup by switching his investment from London to Cairo for just one year. Or, for that matter, the British could have channeled it into Aswan.

American liberals are fond of demanding that some hundreds of millions of dollars be devoted yearly to Near East development, to keep that region in the Western sphere. It would seem more realistic to say that the Near East is faced, not so much by a shortage of potential capital, as by an archaic social system in Arabia which only the Arabians themselves can remedy, be they subjects of King Saud, Sir Abdulla al-Salim al-Subah, KCMG, CIE, or of the Sheiks of Bahrein and Qatar. The Syrians for years have declined United States financial aid, the Egyptians will take it only without strings, and as for Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, clearly they have enough income from oil to care for their own development needs.

Another facet of the problem is the relations between the have and the have-not Arab countries. Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon are transit countries for pipe lines, in constant negotiation with the companies on the question of transit fees. Abdulla Tariki estimates that Tapline, the Aramco pipe line, nets 51 cents a barrel on oil piped to the Mediterranean, or $150,000 a day. In any event the transit countries have been getting less than $30 million a year all told; Egypt is getting some $60 million from Suez tolls, mostly on tankers.

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All this is chicken feed compared with the billion or more reaped by the producing countries.

Some kind of genuine Arab unity would seem to be the answer to this disparity in income. The near future will determine how this is to be achieved—whether it will involve extension of the Egyptian-Syrian United Arab Republic; the greater cohesion of the Arab League; social changes in the Arabian peninsula which will end the medieval appropriation of oil revenues by princely families; and/or the investment of potentially surplus funds by the oil potentates in neighboring countries rather than in London, Zurich, and New York.

Against the threat of Arab unity, the British have one trump card, the geographic position of Kuwait, over which they exercise suzerainty. All the people of this sheikdom, aside from the new oil camps, are concentrated in the port-town. Quite possibly a few thousand British paratroopers could seal off the town, occupy the oil fields and patrol the pipe lines. Burgan, the world's richest oil field, is only 15 miles long and less than that from the sea. The island of Bahrein, the British military stronghold in the Gulf, is less than 300 miles away, as is the Dhahran airbase for United States bombers on the nearby mainland of Arabia. The British have strengthened their paratroop base on Bahrein since the Iraq revolution. British military action presumably would have the hearty support of the United States armed forces, as Kuwait Oil Co. is a joint enterprise of British Petroleum and the Mellons' Gulf Oil Corp.

The threat to the cartel finds the British Tories ready and willing to use force from their bases in Cyprus and Bahrein. Even when Labor is in power at Westminster the situation is not radically different. The oil industry, and the Persian Gulf, are the backbone of Britain's capitalist solvency; British Petroleum is a corporation in which the government itself is the biggest shareholder; the Labor Party executive has never dared look inside this Holiest of Holies.

While the British Tories are quite unashamed in their support of oil imperialism, it has been somewhat different in this country, what with our powerful anti-monopoly tradition and ancient dislike of overt imperialism. The State Department has not flinched in the past 25 years in backing Standard Oil abroad, but the support has been more or less secretive. This is partly because Standard has had to fight Royal Dutch/Shell around the world, and such conflicts go on behind closed doors, so far as diplomacy is concerned. Also, that part of the United States industry which is purely domestic fears the cartel companies and can find powerful support in Congress. So

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the State Department has had to be somewhat furtive in its defense of the cartel's interests.

Critics complain, as a matter of fact, that the State Department has no consistent policy whatsoever in the Near East. Dulles opposed the British-French invasion of Suez in 1956, which was intended to topple Egyptian nationalism and scotch the Arab serpent; but two years later Marines landed in Beirut, and British paratroopers in Jordan, when the Iraq revolution threatened to overwhelm the pro-Western governments of Lebanon and Jordan. It must be conceded that Dulles has a complex problem, perpetuating the cartel's hold, assuring vital resources for Western Europe, and resisting Soviet influence. As the *Wall Street Journal* reports from Beirut: "We are on the wrong side of a social revolution and it's uphill work." Or, as Hanson Baldwin, the *New York Times*' military editor mourns: "Unfortunately, the short-term aims of Arab nationalism, the control of their own resources and the reduction of Western influence, coincide with the short-term aims of Communism, the ousting of the West and the denial of the Middle East's oil to the West."

American liberals have tried to grapple with the problem, but with hardly more success than Dulles. "Economic development" is the magic watchword now for all problems from Aden to Zanzibar. The poor Arabs, in particular, are thought to need several hundred million dollars a year in United States aid, after which they will become technically proficient, afford an outlet for Detroit's depressed industry, and resist the blandishments of Moscow. It must be conceded that the idea of exporting machines, technicians, and educators is vastly superior to exporting machine guns and bombers; unfortunately such "do-goodism" runs into political obstacles at home which the editors of MONTHLY REVIEW have frequently analyzed in these pages. The oil companies doubt, and with good reason, that such economic development will discourage the growth of nationalism and the threat to their continued exploitation of Arab resources.

Various experts have urged ways of perpetuating Western control while mitigating the evils of cartelism. Anthony Nutting, former British minister of state for foreign affairs, with the exquisite British genius for contriving compromise, would join the lions and lambs in a cooperative enterprise benefiting Arabs, consumers, and cartel all at the same time. The cartel would moderate its rapacity (accepting less per annum for more years); Western European consumers would be given a break; and a percentage of the net haul, 5 or 10 percent, would be turned over to a development fund.

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David Rockefeller, vice chairman of Chase Manhattan, the petroleum bank, would also set aside part of the massive profits for development, especially of the Nile and Jordan rivers and the widening of the Suez Canal. "Sowing the oil" on the Venezuelan order is his prescription. Emile Bustani, the Lebanese entrepreneur, wants an Arab Development Bank, financed with $200 million a year from oil, and emptying its purse into development corporations set up by each Arab state.

Bushrod Howard, Jr., is the only oil man who has spoken out candidly on the subject. He has held positions with Iraq Petroleum and Socony and is now an oil consultant in Washington. All the more extraordinary is the admission by one so closely connected with the industry that the cartel has been free to "put unconscionable prices on—and take unconscionable profits from—Middle East oil without answering to any public authority." All price conflicts, he admits, are resolved against the consumer. Because this oil is the world's cheapest energy source, he argues, it must be regulated as a public utility if it is to escape either nationalization or internationalization. The stumbling block is that the companies would claim compensation not on the basis of investment but of future earnings, calculated, he estimates, at some $170 billion over the next 30 years on the basis of $1 profit on each barrel of oil costing 8 to 25 cents to produce. The Near Eastern states, Howard says, feel helpless before the might of the cartel. Iraq, for example, granted a give-away concession covering the entire country to Iraq Petroleum back in 1925 under the British threat that otherwise the rich Mosul region would be handed over to Turkey.

It is quite unlikely now that the Arab countries would look kindly on any outside regulation of their richest resource. Said Ahmed Shukairy, speaking for Saudi Arabia at the UN debate on Lebanon and Jordan:

> Arab oil is our own. It is our national wealth, that falls not essentially, but indeed entirely, within our jurisdiction. It does not admit of any discussion before any international forum. Oil-producing and oil-transiting countries can discuss among themselves what they should discuss and when they should discuss. Oil, our oil, is not a political commodity or an international concern, and we are determined to keep it outside the area of politics.

Or as Sadik Shanshall, Iraq's propaganda minister, put it more succinctly: "It's our oil—not yours. It does not come from New Jersey."

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So far as regulation goes, the cartel is as intransigent as the Arabs. Bushrod Howard reports that when the idea of a Near East development fund financed by 5 to 10 percent of the profits was broached to the State Department, the answer, as in all such matters, was that the proposal must be sponsored by the cartel if the State Department is to consider it. But the classic utterance comes from Emile Soubry, Standard of New Jersey's director in charge of world markets. Asked what he thought of international regulation of Near East petroleum, he answered: "We'd rather fight in an open jungle than in a cage." Soubry has neatly underlined the basic nature of the world oil problem under capitalism. The law of the jungle, under which the domestic industry developed, has been transferred to a world scale, with the inevitable results in world conflict.

The State Department's reaction to the problem of the Near East is that of paralyzed indecision. Whatever foreign policy there is is dictated by Standard Oil, which stands by the law of the jungle. "The United States," comments the *New York Times*, "is groping for a policy that will preserve the peace [read oil] in the Middle East and keep the Russians out." Or, as Jon Kimche of the *Jewish Observer and Middle East Review* puts it, commenting on the need for some kind of control: "The rich and powerful oil companies would then take their proper place in western diplomacy instead of behaving like an unpredictable commercial sputnik spinning around in their own peculiar orbit without relation to the major political considerations of the day."

In this dismal Cassandra chorus, Walter Lippmann, too, raises his plaintive voice: "We do not have as yet the dim intimations of what might be the shape of a new Middle Eastern order. If we had it, we could face Khrushchev with buoyant confidence." Anthony Nutting, the British diplomat, adds that both the United States and Britain have no policy for the Near East, and also no way of denying that their various interventions in recent years, in Suez, Lebanon, and Jordan, were anything more than devices "to cover the dying, nervous twitches of an outdated imperialism." Joseph Alsop, who ranks as a kind of super-Cassandra, sees no hope whatsoever. What can we do? Back up Britain in military occupation of Kuwait, to which Dulles has already given half-assent? If Britain loses the Persian Gulf, it will be driven to bankruptcy; if it holds on, the Arabs will be driven to Moscow. George Kennan, our former ambassador to the Soviets, would cut the Gordian knot by bailing out Great Britain so it would not be dependent on Arab oil (a mere matter of

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$600 million a year or so) and then the Arabs would become more reasonable, their main market gone. But if it is just the oil we are fighting for, adds the *Wall Street Journal,* "then it is not a crusade against Communism and aggression upon which we ride but a frank power drive of precisely the kind we have so long deplored in others."

In this swamp of befuddlement, Moscow beamed a six-pointed light early in 1957. In notes to the Western powers, the Soviets proposed:

(1) To settle problems in the Near East by peaceful negotiations.

(2) Not to interfere in the internal affairs of those countries.

(3) To require no military alignments in the region with any of the great powers.

(4) To liquidate foreign military bases there and withdraw all foreign troops.

(5) To embargo the shipment of arms to the region.

(6) To lend economic assistance without political, military, or other considerations.

The power of the petroleum cartel being what it is, there was no answer from the Western capitals.

Could it be that Western policy is best summarized by reversing the slogan of the French Revolution? That slogan, you will recall, reads: "Peace with all the peoples, war with all the kings!"

PRODUCTION, RESERVES, PROFITS IN 1957

Country	*Production (Thousand tons)*	*Reserves (Thousand tons)*	*Profits[1] (Million)*	*Profits per ton*
United States	346,000	4,020,000	$1,900[2]	$ 5.49
Venezuela	141,000	2,255,000	1,700	12.00
Iran	35,000	4,295,000	440	12.56
Iraq	21,000	3,300,000	275[3]	13.10
Kuwait	56,000	8,100,000	650	11.60
Saudi Arabia	48,000	5,935,000	600	12.50
USSR, East Europe	111,000	3,545,000	—	—
World	899,000	35,705,000	—	—

1 The profits from Venezuela, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia are split 50-50 between the companies and the countries.

2 Excludes profits from foreign operations.

3 Iraq's profits were reduced in 1957 because of the shutdown of pipe lines by Syria in the Suez crisis. Production in 1956 was 31,000,000 tons and profits, $400,000,000.

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Figures on production and reserves from *Statistical Review of the World Oil Industry 1957*, published by British Petroleum (ex-Anglo-Iranian).

Figures on U. S. profits from *Annual Report Petroleum Industry 1957*, published by the Chase Manhattan Bank, of New York; for Venezuela, from *Venezuela Up-to-Date*, July-August 1958, published by the Venezuelan Embassy in Washington. The companies publish no profit figures themselves, as theoretically they are merely holding companies for the partners owning them.

One ton equals approximately 7 barrels.

NEW WORLD OR NO WORLD:
Two Spokesmen for Sanity

BY FREDERICK L. SCHUMAN

Once upon a time in the spring of 1947, at a *Mademoiselle* Forum in New York, I stirred "Scotty" Reston of the *New York Times* to indignation, along with part of my audience. This unplanned and unexpected response was provoked by my suggestion that the purpose of the Truman Doctrine was less to defend Greece and Turkey from alleged dangers of Communist "aggression" than to initiate a new military spending spree as a means of avoiding a postwar American slump and to promote Harry's election in 1948 as the savior of civilization from the "Red Menace." This seemed to me then self-evident to all with eyes to see—and so it seems to me now a dozen years later. It may be (I do not know) that Mr. Reston would now be more favorably disposed toward this "cynical" view than he was then. His eyes are sharp enough. But others are sightless. And it is always indelicate, as in the old folk-tale, for anyone to point out that the Emperor, despite pretenses and popular illusions, really has no clothes.

But truth, like murder, will out—and this more readily in a relatively free society than in one tightly regimented. Without truth, human salvation is unattainable and, in our time, even human survival is doubtful. To disseminate unpopular and unpalatable truths is the mission of MONTHLY REVIEW, fulfilled thus far magnificently. This is

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also the mission of two new books: *The Causes of World War Three* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1958, 172 pages, $3.50)* by pipe-smoking, motorcycle-driving C. Wright Mills, Professor of Sociology at Columbia, and *World Without War* (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1959, 308 pages, $5.00) by the genial and brilliant British scientist, J. D. Bernal, formerly Lecturer on Structural Crystallography at Cambridge and now University Professor of Physics at Birkbeck College, London. Since both books are indispensable to all who would comprehend the realities, rather than the appearances, of our world, both will be widely ignored or at best denounced in the American mass media—which is all the more reason for giving them close attention here.

Both Mills and Bernal in their several ways pose the old question of the nature and sources of war in general and the new question of the meaning of the cold war in particular. Both questions are far too large to be disposed of briefly. Yet a reviewer owes it to authors and readers alike to state his prejudices. Unlike some Marxists of the more naive variety, I have never regarded war as a product of "capitalism," likely to be abolished by the advent of "socialism." Nor do Bernal, a Marxist, or Mills, a non-Marxist, espouse any such views.

Since war as a persisting pattern of human relations, like other monstrous manifestations of Original Sin, antedates "capitalism" by many millennia, we must, it seems to me, seek its common cause not in any given set of economic arrangements among men but rather in the absence of the only set of political arrangements among men which can, by the record, keep the peace. The name of these arrangements is Government. The antithesis of Government is Anarchy, under which, in Hobbes' phrase, human life is "poor, solitary, nasty, brutish, and short." In a world-wide anarchy of rival sovereignties, acknowledging no authority above them, war is inevitably the ultimate form of competition for power—and for profit, pride, and prestige. The only ultimate remedy is World Government.

Since "capitalism" is a kind of economic anarchy wherein each by seeking his own gain seldom contributes to the good of all (Adam Smith to the contrary notwithstanding) and since "socialism" is a kind of economic order wherein (at least as a possibility and as a hope) each can gain by all contributing to the good of all in a society which is economically planned as well as politically governed, it is arguable that the latter dispensation is more conducive to World Government than the former and therefore more relevant to the problem of aboli-

* There is also a paperback edition at $1.50.

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tion of war—which problem in our epoch has become nothing less than the problem of the perpetuation or the suicide of mankind. But the Parliament of Man and the Federation of the World, whether under "capitalist" or "socialist" auspices, are obviously remote. The immediate alternatives are coexistence or co-annihilation among the segments of an ungoverned, disunited, and divided world community. In Churchill's words of 1946: "It is better to live in a world united than in a world divided; but it is also better to live in a world divided than in a world destroyed."

What then is the cold war? It is plainly, as Mills contends, a rejection of coexistence and a preparation for co-annihilation. But here we encounter various levels of meaning and sundry aspects of truth—too many to pursue in one article or one issue. That phase of a puzzling reality which most Americans prefer to ignore, albeit crucial for the outcome, is the subject matter of both of these volumes, explicitly with Mills and implicitly with Bernal. The thesis of the few who perceive this phase is simple:

The cold war as waged by its Western initiators is neither a conventional contest among Powers for hegemony nor a defense of "freedom" against "tyranny." It is, in fact, a fraud. Its rationalization—"collective security" against a Communist plot to "conquer the world"—is a lie, identical with the prevarications and delusions of Mussolini, Hitler, and Hirohito twenty years ago. The function of the lie is to "pump-prime" stagnant Western economies by massive public spending on armaments and by permanent inflation in the name of "perpetual war for perpetual peace," and to keep in power, through appeals to mass fear, the political spokesmen of the economic interest groups whose members profit handsomely from the enterprise. This thesis, incidentally, has been ably expounded for many years by Lawrence Dennis in his fortnightly newsletter, *The Appeal to Reason* (P.O. Box 61, Northampton, Massachusetts).

Is the thesis "true"? Of a certainty, yes—at least as one important facet of a many-levelled truth and with the necessary qualification (which Mills does not neglect) that in the always muddled affairs of more or less human beings who are as often non-rational or irrational as rational, no hypothesis of Machiavellian cunning and conscious deception by any elite is ever wholly tenable. Still, true. And now hideously perilous beyond any possibility of exaggeration. For Western power-holders and policy-makers, having to their discredit whole decades of disastrous blunders and miscalculations, are less and less capable of keeping their "phony war" phony and, in greed or mad-

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ness or both, are now gambling with total death—thus making the survival of mankind contingent upon the fragile reeds of rationality and moderation on the part of other power-holders and policy-makers in Moscow and Peking. So, in the old Russian query: *Shto dyelat?*—What is to be done?

To this question both Bernal and Mills strive valiantly to offer answers which ought to be most seriously pondered (but probably will not be, as both of them realize) by all who feel any concern over the prospects of our common civilization. The author of *White Collar* (1951) and *The Power Elite* (1956) here offers us a trenchant essay on the current absurdity of war, on the vested interests of "the high and the mighty" in the war system, on "the military metaphysicians," "the permanent war economy," "crackpot realism," the default of the American intellectuals, and the possibilities of peace—adroitly spelled out in concrete proposals which admit of no summary but deserve to be read and judged by all citizens still capable of critical thought. Let me suggest, however inadequately, the flavor of this admirable tract by two quotations:

> Leading corporations now profit from the preparation of war. Insofar as the business elite are aware of their profit interests—and that is their responsible business—they press for a continuation of their sources of profit, which often means a continuation of the preparation for war. As sources of political advice and as centers of power, higher business and higher military circles share an interest in the felt need for armaments and for its continual and wasteful development. We cannot assay with accuracy the causal weight of this personnel and their interests, but the combination of a seemingly "permanent war economy" and a "privately incorporated economy" cannot reasonably be supposed to be an unambiguous condition for the making of peace.
>
> I am *not* suggesting that military power is now only, or even mainly, an instrument of economic policy. To a considerable extent, militarism has become an end in itself and economic policy a means of it. Moreover, whatever the case in previous periods of capitalism, in our immediate times war in each country is being prepared in order to prevent another country from becoming militarily stronger. "There is much justification," E. H. Carr has noted, "for the epigram that 'the principal cause of war is war itself.'" Perhaps at no previous period has this been so much the case as now, for the means of war, and war as a means, have never before been so absolute as to make war so economically irrational.
>
> But we must remember that true capitalist brinkmanship consists of the continual preparation for war, just short of it; and that such brinkmanship does have economic functions of im-

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portant capitalist consequence. Moreover, it is by no means clear that the American elite realize the economic irrationality of war itself. In the meantime, an expensive arms race, under cover of the military metaphysic and a paranoid atmosphere of fright, is an economically attractive business. To many utopian capitalists, it has become The Business Way of American Life. (pp. 57-58)

To break the political monopoly of the current powers that are set toward World War III requires that their monopoly of ideas be broken. If truly independent ideas are not even formulated, if we do not set forth alternatives, then we are foolishly trapped by the difficulties those now at the top have got us into. They do not want us to identify *their* difficulties as theirs; they want us to think of *their* difficulties as if these were everybody's. That is what they call "constructive thinking about public problems."

What *they* want they call "constructive," but there are no constructive ways out of their bankruptcy. To be constructive in their sense is to stick our heads further into their sacks. So many of us have already stuck our heads in there that our first job is to pull them out and look around again for genuine alternatives. In this sense it must be said: The first job of the intellectuals today is to be consistently and altogether unconstructive. For to be constructive within the going scheme of affairs is to consent to the continuation of precisely what we ought to be against. (p. 137)

Jack Bernal, no less than Mills, is urging a revolutionary break with the past as the only possible means of avoiding mutual extinction in the future. How and why a physicist can write more sensibly about politics than most political scientists and more sensibly about economics than most economists is a mystery I will leave unresolved, apart from the trite comment that Bernal is a "genius," as I suspected when I first met him in Cambridge in 1929. His second chapter on "nuclear warfare" is by far the best brief account of what we face that I have ever read. But the burden of his message is not fear but hope.

World Without War is a closely reasoned and documented demonstration, supported by 29 statistical tables, charts, and maps (all fascinating) that contemporary science and technology, if harnessed to the tasks of peace, not only can bring about the rapid industrialization of "backward" areas and rescue from poverty that two-thirds of mankind still living in abject misery, but can do so without deprivation for Western industrialized peoples—on the contrary, with improved living standards for all. Bernal's argument is fabulous, massive, and quite beyond refutation. This is not light reading. It may come to be regarded as one of the most important works of the mid-century.

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All statesmen and all citizens will ignore it at their peril, for it points the way, not in utopian abstractions but in concrete quantitative terms, toward an ordered world community dedicated to life rather than to death.

The central and potentially tragic question of how traditional habits and values can be sufficiently modified to promote the realization of man's vast future rather than thermonuclear genocide is a question to which neither Mills or Bernal nor this reviewer nor the editors of MONTHLY REVIEW can offer any pat answer. The human condition in days to come, as in days gone by, may continue to condemn all human societies to breakdown and disintegration and to the eternal frustrations of the dreams of the seers and poets for a community whose members are no longer playthings of destiny and victims of man's inhumanity to man but are somehow masters of their souls and captains of their fate. Bernal sees hope in the possibility, in the years ahead, of "welfare regimes" rather than "war regimes" coming to power in the Western lands and in a continuing process of liberalization in Marxland—whose rulers have, after all, been striving for years to negotiate a *modus vivendi* with the West in the face of stubborn Western resistance. Bernal concludes:

> As we move towards a position in which the fate of humanity can be determined by a couple of men standing at the buttons which will release the fatal rockets, everyone in the world is beginning to realize the danger that we have allowed to grow to these monstrous dimensions. War, always wicked, has now lost any sense. It has ceased to be a way of imposing the will of the stronger on the weaker. It has become a suicide of madness. A future world war will have no victors but only vanquished. Even if we did not have a better alternative—we would still have in the interest of self-preservation to end the present nightmare. But we do have such an alternative. With the knowledge and experience already at our command we could build a world that would provide for every single person in it more than the richest can hope for today, a world in which men's energies would be turned away from struggle against each other to the conquest of the forces of nature. (p. 283)

Bernal has spelled out the alternative in soberly factual and wholly convincing terms. Whether contemporary mankind will accept it will depend, in part, upon the degree to which people become aware that such an alternative is available. Most Americans in 1959 see no such possibility. They may begin to glimpse new prospects on far horizons if they can be persuaded to read these two contributions to sanity.

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WORLD EVENTS

By Scott Nearing

The Road We Are Traveling

As late as 1910, Europe, or "The West," was master of the planet, manufacturing, trading, financing, colonizing, exploiting dependent peoples, and engaging in colonial wars and minor conflicts with rival imperial powers. In 1914 the struggle blazed up in a general war of the empires.

During the forty-five years which separated 1914 from 1959, Europe suffered catastrophic losses. The Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires were destroyed. The German and Italian empires were defeated and dismembered. France lost most of her colonies. Britain, perforce, converted her Empire into a Commonwealth. Most spectacular was Europe's loss of world supremacy. As Europe was downgraded, the United States pushed to the center of the power-politics stage, and the Soviet Union and People's China rose from obscure beginnings to the stature of world powers.

In the atom age, only an area of continental dimension can sit at the top power-politics table and play for the high stakes. If Europe is to count in atom age power-politics, it must integrate along continental lines.

Lenin hoped that a Europe-wide revolution after 1917 would lead to a federation of European people's republics, which eventually would include similar groups from other continents. But matters took a different turn. The war of the fascist powers, 1939-1945, and the cold war of 1946-1959 divided Europe between the capitalists and the Communists. The Communist bloc extends from the North Sea to the Pacific. If the capitalist powers of Europe are to play a hand in the big game, they must get together. After Hitler's failure to unify them, the only possibility lay in a USA-approved and subsidized federation of Western and Southern Europe.

Since the cold war was inaugurated and United States grants-in-aid to crippled and bankrupt European regimes were regularized under the Marshall Plan, Washington has left no stone unturned in its efforts to unify and integrate capitalist Europe to a point where it could take care of itself economically and politically, but did not possess sufficient power to threaten Washington's program for a century

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of American planet-wide supremacy.

NATO nations held a fateful conference in Paris which ended December 20, 1958. The United States Secretary of State, in his chosen role, with a whip in one hand and a carrot in the other, faced the same impasse that has confronted Washington since the inauguration of the cold war. At the conference, Paris and London were at loggerheads over the issue of a common European market or a free trade arena in which rival economies would fight for supremacy. France and Germany were wary and suspicious of one another. Dictator De Gaulle wanted a leading role in the settlement of European problems. All of Western Europe was wary of Washington's policies, and in sharp disagreement with its to-the-brink adventures in Lebanon and the Far East.

An impartial observer, thumbing over the historical record and reading the uncommunicative communique from NATO's spokesmen on December 20th would probably agree that capitalist Europe will continue on the road it is now traveling. The road leads through a dark age of contending nationalisms, suspicion, fear, hatred, and conflict, with Washington paying the bills and calling the tune. This age of relative European poverty, weakness, and backwardness will end when Europeans grow weary of competitive balkanization under North American duress and make common cause with the peoples who are planning and building a cooperative world.

In General We Agree

An American clergyman, who has gone out of his way to advertise the "bad things" in the Soviet Union, made his first visit to the USSR in July, 1958. A report on his observations appeared in *Fellowship* (Box 271, Nyack, N. Y. $3 a year) for November 1, 1958. Moscow as a "going concern" surprised and impressed him. The city was "clean, with heavy automobile traffic, efficiently and smoothly directed, the crowds, fairly well dressed, obviously adequately fed, giving one an impression of great vitality, though not exuberance." But it was the children that touched him.

> One morning I saw a group of Pioneers, children of about eight to ten years of age, being escorted on a tour by their counselors. The children looked and acted very much as any group of American children on a happy holiday might look and act. They were well-dressed, spotlessly clean, beautiful, vivacious. Their faces bore the stamp of frankness, inner assurance, loveliness of character. If they were regimented, subdued to conformity and fear, spies on their parents, or anything of that sort, they

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were the most magnificent troop of child actors that ever appeared on this planet. A society, an educational system, which can produce children like these must have aspects and possibilities other than those we have tended to ascribe to a totalitarian Communist society.

We were in Moscow at about the same time as our ecclesiastical friend. We also saw the children, frank, self-assured, lovely. But it never entered our heads to think of them as regimented, subdued, terrified conformists, or spies. Frankness, self-assurance, and loveliness were written all over them. This was to us the logical and probable output of a society working toward cooperation and mutual aid and emphasizing peace and friendship along the way.

Bourgeois Democracy in Eclipse

"Anxiety for Asia and Africa" heads a lead editorial in *Socialist Commentary,* December, 1958 (447 Strand, London WC 2, England, $2.75 a year). "Everyone who has a care for democracy," the editorial begins, "must be alarmed by the trend of events in Asia and Africa. Country after country there inaugurated its independence by adopting western parliamentary institutions; in country after country—the latest is the Sudan—we are now seeing these institutions distorted, weakened, abandoned. It is a frightening thought that only in India, and possibly Malaya, are they still working peacefully and in the framework of civil liberties and tolerance which are of democracy's essence. Even Ghana is moving in a dubious direction—and all this is so soon after we had rejoiced at seeing democracy strike root in new soil. Why is this happening? Why has the twentieth century so disastrously belied the democratic optimism of the nineteenth?"

Why has the socialist twentieth century turned its back upon democratic optimism of the bourgeois nineteenth?

The answer is obvious. Bourgeois democracy is not a universal politico-social form. Like many other social forms it has its time and place. Bourgeois democracy did not exist under the conditions of European feudalism. It enjoyed its heyday under capitalism. Democracy, in the late nineteenth century meaning of that term, is in eclipse. It will survive for a time in nooks and crannies of the old social order. In its place will be a planned, coordinated, world community, producing goods and services according to capacity and distributing them according to need. It is quite possible that the Chinese commune, under the general leadership of the Communist Party, will prove to be one of the norms of the new socialist world.

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Revolution in the Countryside

Five out of six Chinese are "peasants," dwelling in hamlets and villages and making their living from the land. Today they are reshaping their way of life. If they succeed, they will have achieved one of the decisive revolutions of modern times. It is too early to summarize the 1958 movement of Chinese villagers into peoples' communes, but letters from China and magazine articles contain much factual and descriptive matter.

Anna Louise Strong, with her long background of experience in revolutions, West and East, is once again in China. In the *National Guardian* of December 29, 1958, she reports on Evergreen Commune, which was organized in August, 1958. This commune occupies about 30 square miles, with some 10,000 arable acres, near Peking. Its population is about 40,000. In its 8,823 households there are 13,000 able-bodied workers.

In the spring of 1958, people in the Evergreen area read in the papers about the formation of communes in Honan Province. They were interested and sent a delegation to Honan to observe and report. The returning delegates reported favorably. A discussion was begun in the course of which over 200,000 comments were written and stuck up on public bulletin boards. During the discussions every member of the eight cooperative farms which were considering amalgamation into a commune went on record. The result: 13,000 in favor of a commune, 20 to 30 against.

When public opinion had jelled, each cooperative farm elected twenty delegates who attended a general meeting and formed a preparatory joint committee of fifty persons. The committee drew up a plan of amalgamation which was approved by a meeting of the 320 delegates. The meeting then elected a commune committee of thirty members, including a chairman from each cooperative farm. The commune committee divided the functions of the proposed commune into departments: planning and statistics, finance, agriculture, livestock, forestry, commissary, culture, health, education, and the militia. Each department was headed by a chairman or "minister." Balances in the eight farm cooperative treasuries, totalling about one million yuan, or $400,000, were turned over to the commune, with enough supplies to last through 1958.

At the New Year, 1959, the commune began full functioning. It has a three-year plan providing for electrification of the entire commune area, irrigation of all commune lands by 1960 (two-thirds are now irrigated), and the construction of a plant to manufacture fertili-

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zer. The commune provides free food for all members and their families, free maternity care, nurseries, kindergartens and primary schools, free films and drama, and one-half of the medical expenses of members. These community services are furnished by 134 public canteens, 86 nurseries, 62 kindergartens, 12 maternity homes, 6 "happy courts" for old people, 39 tailoring shops with 132 sewing machines which are to make "free clothing for everyone." One of the aims of the three-year plan is college education by 1961 for all who want it and are prepared for it.

Peking Review for December 16, 1958, devoted a large part of its space to the communes. The 4,300 households of Tingchi People's Commune in Kiangsu formerly lived in 500 scattered villages and hamlets. After a survey, the commune re-housed itself in a number of settlements, 17 of which were newly built. Each settlement accommodates the commune members working in that area. Number Two Production Team, for example, became responsible for housing its 280 households. Each household was provided with two bedrooms and a living room. Larger families got four or five rooms. In addition, the team established dining rooms, nurseries, maternity wards, stores, barber shops, tailoring shops, schools, and clubs.

Some community dining rooms keep their own livestock, breed fish in their own ponds, and cultivate kitchen gardens for fruit and vegetables. As a rule they serve three meals a day for workers, and in special cases a night meal for night workers. Meals are sent out to workers in the fields, to the sick, and to mothers on maternity leave.

The Hero People's Commune in Honan Province operates the East Wind Iron and Steel works. The plant employs 1,432 workers and turns out pig iron from native-style blast furnaces. It also makes steel. The Worker's Congress, the highest administrative organ of the East Wind plant, elects a factory committee consisting of leading administrative personnel, worker's representatives, and model workers. All leading personnel, from the superintendent of the factory down, do physical work on the furnaces. They work and live like other workers, except that they put in two hours less work a day at the furnaces to give them time for their administrative duties.

Commune factories and workshops are making farm tools, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, cloth, artificial cotton, building materials, pottery, alcohol, edible oils, and many food items. They utilize local raw materials and skills and design their products chiefly for the local markets.

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Manufacturing industry and agriculture are thus being integrated at the local level, with local materials, local capital, and local skills producing for the local market. During the planting and harvesting periods, commune labor is concentrated on the land. At other times it is employed in other departments of commune work. Thus the differences between land worker and industrial worker tend to disappear. Standards of living are equalized and income is received at the consumer level, according to need, in the form of personal necessaries and social services. At the production level it is paid, in wages, in proportion to productivity, with all hands, from management down, doing a share of the "dirty work."

China Reconstructs, in a leading article in its November issue, sums up one of the significant aspects of communes as they are developing during their first year: "All-round management of agriculture, forestry, animal husbandry, fisheries and side-occupations, industry (the worker), agriculture (the peasant), exchange (the trader), culture and education (the student), and military affairs (the militiamen) merge into one." (Anyone wishing to secure copies of *Peking Review* or *China Reconstructs* should contact Imported Publications & Products, 4 West 16th Street, New York 11, N. Y.)

Chinese communes are not finished products, turned out by a business machine in a central administrative office. Rather they are a revolutionary response of half a billion people to the challenge of mastering nature and providing abundance and well-being for an evolving Asian community.

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WHAT THE NEARINGS SAW

BY ALEXANDER L. CROSBY

What's happening in China today is virtually an official secret, kept from the American people by an archaic State Department that won't let newspapermen or curious citizens find out. This barrier could easily be hurdled if the newspapers and wire services cared enough about freedom of the press to send reporters without benefit of visa. But the press is more concerned with keeping Red China out of the United Nations than challenging Mr. Dulles's dictum.

Helen and Scott Nearing, two tireless and resourceful Yankees, made a long visit to China in the winter of 1957-58 without asking permission. They have written a short report that is exciting to read, crowded with facts and people, full of hope for China and even the non-socialist world.* Combined with their account is a summary of what they saw and learned during extensive travel in the Soviet Union as guests of the Soviet Peace Committee.

The Nearings are peculiarly qualified to report on the building of a socialist state, for they are builders themselves. Twice—once in Vermont, and now in Maine—they have taken hold of poor and lonely acreage and made it produce all that their vegetarian hearts could desire, with the possible exception of salt. So far as I know, they still buy salt at the country store, but I would not be surprised to hear that plans for 1960 include a project to extract salt from the sea water that now provides huge quantities of kelp for their monumental compost piles.

With this background, the Nearings could see much in China that would be missed by other observers. They saw it. They found out what kind of pines were being planted on the naked hillsides, how the watering problem was solved. They were especially interested in flood control. Before liberation, the Nearings write, floods were considered inevitable and the surviving victims became beggars, going from village to village in search of rice. The picture today is entirely different.

The author is a former newspaperman, now a free-lance writer in New York.

* Helen and Scott Nearing, *The Brave New World,* Social Science Press, Harborside, Maine, 1958, $3.50.

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Old dikes have been strengthened, new ones built. When a 28-day rain in 1957 caused record flood levels in northwest China, 300,000 students, farmers, workers, government employees and soldiers volunteered to fight the yellow tide. They won.

Building a high dike with baskets of earth carried by volunteers is beyond the comprehension of most Americans. Why do the Chinese do it? Because, the Nearings explain, they understand the need for the dam.

But how can a government explain projects and recruit volunteers among a population that, before liberation, was 90 percent illiterate? The answer is that the Chinese today are probably the most thoroughly organized people in the world. In the countryside, the dominant organization was the cooperative when the Nearings were there (now it is the Commune). In the cities and towns, there are block committees that reach every household.

A pedicab driver, chairman of a block committee, told the Nearings: "I may be called on the telephone or otherwise contacted and asked to explain some new development or policy. If the matter is urgent, within half an hour we can reach every householder in our block organization. This is done not only by notices posted and handbills distributed, but by neighbors, speaking to each other—mouth to ear."

The authors report spectacular progress in almost every sector of Chinese life. The program to "greenize" the brown hills (and thus achieve permanent flood control) is well advanced. People are moving from the densely populated lowlands into the mountainous areas which cover about two thirds of the nation. Railroads and modern highways are being built. Industry is making great strides; the first Chinese passenger planes and autos, for example, are now being produced.

Schools and colleges are multiplying. A typical graduate of a middle school, comparable to a United States high school, has had five years of chemistry, five years of physics, four years of geometry, two years of trigonometry, and four years of algebra.

The traditional filth of the cities has been banished. The Chinese pedestrian looks for a spittoon when he wants to spit, which is frequently. No less startling has been the abolition of the time-honored squeeze and other forms of public graft.

"Many socialists in the West are eager to change the world," the Nearings remark, "but most of them express no great interest in changing themselves, or in developing human beings who are capable of building such a world and equally capable of living in it after it is

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built." The Chinese, say the authors, are resolved to make the necessary changes in themselves. The method for doing this is the rectification movement. Through meetings, wall newspapers, and heart-to-heart talks, the believers in socialism are working on those who still have doubts. As a university graduate put it: "We patiently point out mistakes, meeting argument with argument until we convince our rightists that their ideas are no longer applicable to the present conditions in People's China."

This process must be one of the miracles of the mysterious East.

The Chinese people do not regard themselves as having yet achieved socialism, the Nearings point out. There is a considerable distance to go. Much of industry and business is still privately owned, although under complete government control.

How about the Soviet Union and China? Is there any basis for the hope of some Westerners that the two socialist giants will eventually try to strangle each other? Has the extensive Russian aid to China given the Russians a foothold they will not easily relinquish?

To the latter questions, the Nearings answer with an emphatic No. They found nothing but good will between the two nations. The Russians gave abundant technical help and other assistance when it was desperately needed. The Chinese proved themselves apt pupils and grateful neighbors. Factories that were once under Russian direction, such as the great iron and steel complex of Anshan, are now being operated by the Chinese. Most of the Soviet technicians have left the country.

The Nearings' report on the Soviet Union gives special attention to education. University standards are far beyond those of the United States. Their Russian interpreter revealed that she had hoped to become a geographer, but the University of Moscow had rejected her because her score in seven examinations was five "excellent" and two "good." Only one "good" was allowed. This university with 26,000 students accepts about 1 out of 10 applicants.

But there is no dearth of college students. Before the war, the colleges were turning out 109,000 specialists a year; by 1957 the figure was 259,000.

Books are available for everybody. In 1914 there was one library for every 11,000 people. The current ratio is one for every 500. There were 400,000 libraries in 1957, including 147,000 public libraries. (The United States has 7,257 public libraries.)

A moving chapter tells about the rebuilding of Stalingrad when the survivors refused to leave their vast rubble heap in favor of a new

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site recommended by planners and architects. It took a year to dispose of the rubble. Citizens worked in teams, without pay.

"An immense planting program is in operation," the authors report. "Flowers, shrubs and trees are to fill every available space. With yearly rainfall of less than ten inches, the long hot dry summer makes it necessary to water every green thing planted, at least for the first few years. This the citizens have pledged themselves to do." Quite a contrast to the way of life in American parks and public forests, where guards and wardens are employed to prevent the citizens from wrecking the green things.

The Nearings got cordial receptions at every point in the Soviet Union and China. Again and again they were urged to tell their friends in the United States that the Russian and Chinese people wanted peace above all else. But they found little love for the policies of the United States government.

"Until quite recently the Chinese placed the United States at the top of the list of China's friends," they note. "Today the United States occupies a position toward the bottom of the list and the Soviet Union is in first place."

Since there is no shortage of writers dedicated to the task of exposing the wickedness of the Soviet Union and Red China, the Nearings' avoidance of any censure is understandable. Yet the fact is that both the Soviet Union and China are something less than infallible. The authors' unreserved enthusiasm for what they saw would have been more solid if the successes had been weighed against the blunders.

The Spartan temperament of the authors is reflected in pages bare of running heads and an index limited to 116 headings. A map of their travels would have been a luxury, but interesting to follow.

No one has argued for world federation more ably and persistently than Scott Nearing. "We raised this question with many persons in the New World," the authors relate. "The answers were almost everywhere the same. They said that this step might be taken some day, but the time was not yet ripe. They insisted that the surging nationalism of the past two decades, centered about independence and self-determination, would tolerate no interference, especially not the restraints imposed by a strong world authority. Finally they argued that socialism is not yet sufficiently developed to take a step beyond the nation to the inter-nation."

But the time is coming. And when it comes, those who reap the benefits will owe thanks to Scott and Helen Nearing for their part in helping Americans know the people we aren't supposed to like.

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(*continued from inside front cover*)

World Without War that it spread its review over two issues (November 28 and December 5). "It is," writes *Tribune's* reviewer, "a heroic achievement that Prof. Bernal has brought off, without an elaborate staff or the backing of a wealthy institute, in the intervals of his ordinary duties, and working against time because of the urgency of the world situation. The sheer weight of information contained in his book is valuable enough; but the shape he has given to it is yet more important." The price of *World Without War* will be $5, but if you order before March 25th you can buy it for $3.

(3) *American Labor in Midpassage* is an outgrowth of last summer's special labor issue which we planned and published in conjunction with *The American Socialist*. More than half of the book is new material, which includes a long essay on the development and theory of the American labor movement by Bert Cochran. Price on publication will be $3.50; before March 25th, $2.

As we go to press we learn from *Publisher's Weekly* (January 12), journal of the book publishing trade, that Anne Braden's *The Wall Between* is one of the "leading contenders" in the non-fiction category for the 1959 National Book Award. We are naturally gratified and hope that Anne wins this richly deserved honor. But whether she does or not, the fact that *The Wall Between* has, so to speak, reached the "finals" in the eyes of a very competent jury seems to us to be an eloquent commentary on the all-but-universal failure of the commercial press to review the book. We urge MR readers to call librarians' attention to the book's "leading contender" status and request that they order it for their own libraries. The awards will be announced on March 3rd.

We are glad to announce new pamphlets by our good friends and collaborators Corliss Lamont and Scott Nearing. Corliss Lamont's is his "Basic Pamphlet" No. 12 and is entitled "A Peace Program for the U.S.A." It can be ordered from Basic Pamphlets, Box 42, Cathedral Station, New York 25. The prices are 10c a single copy, 50c for 7, $1 for 15; and 6c a copy for all orders of 50 or more.

Scott Nearing's pamphlet is his "Social Science Pamphlet" No. 2 and is entitled "Soviet Education." It can be ordered from the Social Science Institute, Harborside, Maine. The prices are 50c per copy up to 10 and 35c per copy for 10 or more. Note please, that these pamphlets should be ordered direct from the publishers and *not* from MR.

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As we go to press news comes of the death of Professor G. D. H. Cole, the grand old man of British socialism. Cole was 69 and had only recently retired from his professorship at Oxford. Just a few months ago he climaxed an astonishingly prolific career as scholar and writer by bringing out the last two volumes of his six-volume *History of Socialist Thought.* Many subscribers in the New York area will remember him for his lecture at last May's MR birthday party: we are glad that we were able to introduce him to so large and appreciative a socialist audience on what turned out to be his last trip abroad. We join with socialists all over the world in mourning his death, and we send our sympathy to his distinguished wife, Margaret Cole, whom we recall meeting with pleasure when she was here with him last spring. G. D. H. Cole will be greatly missed by the world socialist movement.

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